

DEATH OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN IN SPAIN

When a U.S. citizen dies in Spain, we stand ready to assist with the notification of the next-of-kin (NOK) of the deceased, help with burial or transportation arrangements, provide addresses of local funeral homes and local offices, explain the procedure for obtaining an Spanish death certificate from local authorities and produce an official record of the death which can be used in the United States. We can assist family members in returning the deceased's remains to the United States. However, costs may be high and must be paid by the family. We can also act to protect the property and personal estate of a deceased U.S. citizen until such property can be turned over to the NOK.

Regulations cited in this report are contained in the following sources:

Spanish Government Decree N. 2263/1974 of July 20, 1974, published in the Spanish Official Bulletin N. 197 of August 17, 1974;

Addendum to Decree N. 2263/1974 by the Director General of Public Health, published in the Spanish Official Bulletin N. 180 of July 28, 1976.

Ordinance Regulating Cremation of Bodies and Human Remains ("Ordenanza Reguladora de la Prestacion del Servicio de Incineracion de cadaveres y Restos Humanos), dated July 14, 1971, established by the Spanish Public Health Service.

Autopsy

According to Spanish law, an autopsy is mandatory (1) in all cases of accidental death (2) in cases in which the deceased was not attended by a physician at the time of death, and (3) whenever ordered by a Judge.

Local Death Certificate

Local death certificates are issued upon receipt of the report on the cause of death and a copy of the identity card, or a copy of the U.S. passport, by the registrar of deaths in the district civil status office with jurisdiction over, either the place of residence or the place of death. The death certificate is the official document that certifies the death of an individual. There are different versions:

1. Extract Certificate: This is a summary of the information related to the death, as it appears in the Civil Register. This can be:

- Ordinary: It is issued in Spanish in the autonomous communities in which the only official language is Spanish.
- International or multilingual: This version is valid in the countries that have ratified the Vienna Convention of 8 September 1976. This certificate is issued in the official language of each of the signatory countries of that convention

(Spain, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey, Serbia-Montenegro).

- Bilingual: Whenever an extract certificate is requested in an autonomous community that has its own official language, the certificate will be issued in Spanish and in the official language of the autonomous community in which it is issued.

2. Literal: This is a literal copy of the registration of the death, containing all of the data related to the identity of the deceased and the events surrounding the death.

Burial/Interment:

Maximum period before interment

- Embalmed bodies must be buried within 96 hours (Article 15)
- When temporary preservation method is used, bodies must be buried within 72 hours (Article 15)
- Unembalmed bodies must be buried within 48 hours, but not before the lapse of 24 hours (Article 15)
- The remains of a person who has died as the result of a contagious disease must be buried immediately (Article 13)

Cremation:

1. The cremation procedures and method are regulated by existing Public Health Service and Municipal regulations which specifically state that **written authorization** for cremation, signed by the decedent in life, or a statement from the next of kin indicating that the decedent in life made known his/her desire to be cremated, be presented to the local authorities before cremation may be authorized. This requirement obviously poses some problems in cases of death when the next of kin is not in Spain.
2. If the required statement is not available, local burial or embalming will have to take place within 48 hours after death. It is therefore recommended that when cremation is requested and no next of kin or legal representative is present in Spain, specific authorization for cremation be included in the instructions through the Department for disposition of the remains. The Embassy will then officially inform the local authorities of the receipt of telegraphic statement from the next of kin authorizing cremation. A written statement must follow.
3. There are many facilities for cremation in Spain.

Disinterment:

Embalmed remains may be disinterred at any time. Unembalmed remains may only be disinterred after five years. Unembalmed bodies may be disinterred before five years only

with special permission from Spanish Health authorities, which is not routinely granted, provided cremation is effected immediately thereafter(Article 7 of Addendum). The cost of exhumation and preparation for shipment is approximately U.S.\$1,800 for remains buried for five years or more.

Embalming:

Embalming may not be performed earlier than 24 hours or later than 48 hours from the time of death (Article 15). Embalming methods employed in Spain are adequate for preservation of remains but cosmetics will have to be applied by the U.S. funeral home if the body is to be viewed.

Spanish Public health regulation specifically provide for the appointment of a Public Health Doctor to supervise the embalming (Article 21 and 23). The remains of a person who has died as the result of a contagious disease may not be embalmed and must be buried immediately (Article 13). The funeral parlor in Madrid secures authorization for embalming as required by local authorities and obtains the certification thereafter.

Transportation of Remains to the United States:

If NOK or legal representative of a deceased person decides to transport the remains for burial in the United States, a Spanish funeral home will need to provide the following documents to the Embassy so a Consular Mortuary Certificate can be issued:

- Local death certificate from Civil Registry.
- Certificate of embalming (medical).
- Transport authorization from the local Public Health Service (“Sanidad”).
- Certificate of placement of remains in a sealed coffin or container, issued by the Spanish customs authorities.
- Certificate of exhumation and/or cremation of remains (when applicable) issued by the Spanish municipal authorities.
- Specific travel itinerary (method of transport to the United States, plus the specific place and scheduled time of arrival of the remains at the POE.)

The accompanying documents will be affixed to the Consular Mortuary Certificate, and will be signed by the consular officer and impressed with the consular seal. These documents are returned to the funeral home director who then delivers the remains and paperwork to the airport for transportation to the United States. Please note, however, that preparation of the remains for air transport does not necessarily mean that the remains will be suitable for viewing by relatives upon arrival in the United States.

Costs

- Local interment in Madrid and in other major cities within the Madrid consular district without embalming (it is not the practice in Spain to embalm bodies for local burial) is approximately U.S. \$3,500.

- Embalming in Madrid costs approximately U.S. \$1,200.
- Preparation for shipment, including container costs, embalming, documentation, casket and coffin, and delivery to airport, costs approximately U.S. \$8,800 (This cost is based on 150 Kilograms as the estimated total weight of embalmed remains, casket and shipping container. The total cost includes 250 euros for the airway bill fee and import service charge.)
- Cremation and shipment of ashes from Madrid to New York costs approximately U.S. \$5,500. The same service in Malaga/Sevilla/Alicante costs approximately U.S. \$5,750.
- Preparation and shipment of remains from the Canary Islands for cremation adds about U.S. \$1,000 to the above costs. Cremation and deposit of ashes in a columbarium in Madrid costs approximately U.S. \$4,500. The same service in Malaga and/or Seville costs approximately U.S. \$4,200

It is estimated that a minimum of nine to ten working days is necessary, following receipt of funds, to complete local arrangements for shipment of the remains to the United States. Special circumstances, for instance cases in which an autopsy is mandatory, may extend this period significantly.

Money can be transferred from the United States using private companies, such as Western Union, or via the Department of State's OCS/TRUST system or directly transferred to a local funeral home bank account in Spain. Information on money transfers is available on the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs webpage "[Sending Money to U.S. Citizens Overseas](http://travel.state.gov/) (<http://travel.state.gov/>)."

Consular Report of Death Abroad

Although authenticated copies of the local death certificate can be obtained, they are unacceptable in the United States for insurance and estate purposes. In the United States, a "Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad" (CRODA) issued by the U.S. consular officer is generally used in lieu of a foreign death certificate as proof of death. The CRODA is a report that provides the essential facts concerning the death of a U.S. citizen, disposition of remains, and custody of the personal effects of a deceased citizen. The Report of Death is based on the foreign death certificate, and cannot be completed until the foreign death certificate has been issued. The CRODA can sometimes take from two to three weeks or longer after the date of the death, depending on how long it takes local authorities to complete the local death certificate. In Spain, the cause of death is not reflected on the death certificate base on the Order of June 6, 1994.

We will provide the NOK with up to 20 certified copies of the Report of Death at the time the initial report is issued. These are provided at no fee. For information on how to request a certified copy of a CRODA, please visit the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs webpage "[Copy of a Report of Death of an American Citizen Abroad](http://travel.state.gov/) (<http://travel.state.gov/>)."

Additional Information

Please visit the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web pages “[Consular Report of Death](#)” and “[Death of U.S. Citizens Abroad by Non-Natural Causes](#).”

The following is a list of local funeral homes with the Madrid consular district which is comprised of the provinces of Alava, Albacete, Alicante, Almería, Asturias, Ávila, Badajoz, Burgos, Cáceres, Cádiz, Cantabria, Castellón, Ciudad Real, Córdoba, Cuenca, Granada, Guadalajara, Guipúzcoa, Huelva, Jaén, La Coruna, La Rioja, León, Lugo, Madrid, Málaga, Murcia, Navarra, Orense, Palencia, Pontevedra, Salamanca, Segovia, Sevilla, Soria, Toledo, Valencia, Valladolid, Vizcaya, Zamora, Canary Island which lie off the northwest African coast and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the Northern coast of Africa. Please note that there is a U.S. Consulate in Barcelona that can assist when an American dies in the area of Barcelona. Information is available at <http://barcelona.usconsulate.gov/>.

Mortuary establishments exist in all provincial capitals and other sizable cities. Generally, services are provided only by establishments officially designated by the municipal government. In some localities, however, private mortuaries operate. In the city of Madrid, there are different private funeral homes and a Municipal mortuary establishment “SERVICIOS FUNERARIOS DE MADRID”, located at Salvador de Madariaga, 11, 28017 Madrid, Spain, telephone 011-34-91-543-5864; 011-34-91-573-9420; e-mail: www.emsf.es. The crematory is at the same address.

PARCESA: (Phone: 902-100-225) (Cell # 686-963-658) Juan Alberto Diaz de Villa (Legal Representative) Vicente Ayuso Dominguez Crta. Madrid-Colmenar, Salida 20 28100- Alcobendas (Madrid)	INTERFUNERARIAS: (Phone: 91-524-24-24) Sonsoles/ Maria Paz C/ Comuneros de Castilla, 15 28019- Madrid (Entrada: Pso. Quince de Mayo)
EMPRESA MIXTA DE SERVICIOS FUNERARIOS MADRID (Phone 91-510-81-82 or 91-510-81-00) Isabel Uralde Lopez (Director) Ms. Elena and Mr. Sanchez (Director’s assistant) Jose Salvador Argente Saez (Marketing Director) C/Salvador de Madariaga, 11 28027- Madrid	JEWISH COMMUNITY Ruben Benchaya(670-631-777) C/Balmes, 3 Atn. Hebra Kadisha 28010- Madrid hk@cjmadrid.org
FUNERAL HOME NUESTRA SRA. DE LOS REMEDIOS C/ Antonio Robles, 4 28034- Madrid	<u>Alcalá de Henares, Madrid</u> “Cementerio Jardín, S.L Crta de Pastrana, Km 3 28819 Alcalá de Henares Telephone 91-877-03-93

<u>Alicante</u> “Funeraria La Siempreviva” Vial de los Cipreses, 2 03006- Alicante Telephone 96-510-08-22	<u>Asturias</u> “Funerarias Reunidas” C/ Asturias 13-15 33004- Oviedo Telephone 98-521-18-55
<u>Gijón</u> “Funeraria Gijonesa, S.A.” Tanatorio Cabueñes, s/n 33203-Gijon Telephone 98-513-40-80	<u>Bilbao</u> Instituto Municipal de Servicios Funerarios y Cementerios Plaza del Museo, 5- Lonja 48009- Bilbao Telephone 94-423-10-19
<u>Castellón</u> Crematorio Tanatorio Cementerio Municipal Castellón Telephone 954-210075	<u>Granada</u> Crematorio San José de Granada Pso de las Sabica s/n 18009- Granada Telephone 958-22-1864
<u>La Coruña</u> Cementerio-Crematorio Municipal Feans, s/n 15190-Mesoiro La Coruna Telephone 981-13-82-33	<u>Las Palmas</u> FUCASA, S.A Urb. Lomo Blanco Las Torres Arguineguin, 24 35010- Las Palmas Telephone 928-480212; 928-48-02-16
<u>Málaga</u> Crematorio de Málaga PARCEMASA Colonia Santa Ines, Campanillas, Km.5 Cementerio San Gabriel) 29590- Málaga Telephone 95-243-41-00	<u>Parque Cementerio PARCESAN</u> Crta Cerros del Águila, s/n 29651- Fuengirola Málaga Telephone 95-246-42-72
<u>Crematorio Virgen del Carmen</u> Ctra. De Ojen, s/n 29600- Marbella Malaga Telephone 95-277-6356	<u>Tanatorio-Crematorio Arcoiris/</u> <u>SERVISA</u> Crta. Santa Catalina, 49 30012- Murcia Telephone 968-34 1250/59/61
<u>SERFUSA</u> Mezquita, s/n Carretera Cementerio Sta. Lucia 30202- Cartagena Murcia Telephone 968-12-13-13	<u>Tanatorio-Crematorio Samper La</u> <u>Inmaculada</u> Prolongación Baldomero Romero, s/n 30740 San Pedro del Pinatar Murcia

<p>EMORVISA Avda de Castrelos, 212 36210- Vigo Pontevedra Telephone 986-212301</p>	<p>Servicios Funerarios Zorroaga Duque de Mandas, 14 20012 San Sebastian Telephone 943-422129</p>
<p>Crematorio-Cementerio de San Fernando Sevilla Avda. del Doctor Fedriani s/n 41015- Sevilla Telephone 95-4902959; 95-490-2840</p>	<p><u>Valencia</u> Crematorio-Cementerio General Plaza Sto. Domingo de Guzmán, s/n 46017- Valencia Telephone 96-378-2278</p>

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